CLAIM LISTING

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A poly-ß-carboxyacrylamide polymer of formula (I)

(I)

wherein

X is an alkaline metal or a substituent capable of bringing about an exchange reaction with a salt of an alkaline earth metal,

said polymer having a ponderal average molecular weight greater than or equal to 2,000.

- (Original) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein said polymer of formula(I) has a ponderal average molecular weight ranging between 5,000 and 50,000.
- 3. (Original) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein said polymer of formula (I) has a ponderal average molecular weight ranging between 10,000 and 30,000.
 - 4. (Original) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein X is Na.

- 5. (Original) A process for preparing a polymer as described in claim 1, comprising the step of polymerisation in an aqueous phase of a maleate of ammonium and of an alkaline metal or a precursor thereof in the presence of a chain terminating compound in the form of a maleate completely salified with an alkaline metal or with a substituent capable of bringing about an exchange reaction with a salt of an alkaline earth metal, at a temperature of between 90 and 175°C and a molar ratio between chain terminating compound and monomer to be polymerised equal to or greater than 1:8.
- 6. (Original) A process according to claim 5, wherein the compound of formula (I) is prepared by means of polymerisation in the aqueous phase of a maleate of sodium and ammonium in the presence of a chain terminating compound in the form of a maleate salified with an alkaline metal selected from lithium, sodium and potassium.
- 7. (Original) A process according to claim 6, wherein the monomer subjected to polymerisation is maleate of sodium and ammonium and the chain terminating compound is disodium maleate.
- 8. (Original) A process according to claim 5, wherein the reaction temperature is between 125 and 150°C.
- 9. (Original) A polymer obtainable according to the process described in claim 5.

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- 10. (Original) The use of the polymer described in claim 1 as a sequestering agent in relation to the alkaline earth metals in the form of salts.
- 11. (Original) The use according to claim 10 as a sequestering agent for calcium and magnesium in the form of bicarbonate, chloride and sulphate.
- 12. (Currently amended) The use according to claim [[11]] <u>10</u> as a sequestering agent for calcium in the form of <u>calcium</u> bicarbonate.

Claim 13 (Canceled).

- 14. (Currently amended) A detergent composition characterised in that it comprises an effective amount of comprising the polymer described in claim 1.
- 15. (Currently amended) A collutory <u>composition</u> characterised in that it comprises an effective amount of <u>comprising</u> the polymer described in <u>any one of claim</u>
 1.
- 16. (Currently amended) A decalcifying device characterised in that it comprises <u>comprising</u> [[a]] <u>the</u> polymer [[as]] described in any one of claim 1.